



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
August 14, 2018

Lee Francis Cissna
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20529

Dear Director Cissna:

I write with dismay upon learning of your having accepted an invitation to speak to an organization that the Southern Poverty Law Center has cited as an "anti-immigrant hate group." The Center for Immigration Studies (CIS) has a long history of publishing and circulating white-nationalist and anti-Semitic writings and producing debunked reports to make unfounded allegations about immigrants and crime. Through the use of offensive terminology and repeated falsehoods, CIS has sought to convince the public to oppose entry to our country – even legal entry – by non-white immigrants and has repeatedly called for the end of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

To speak with such an organization would be to lend it legitimacy. When Acting Director Thomas Homan of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement addressed CIS in June, he was rightly criticized for doing so and subjecting his agency and its mission to negative press coverage as a result. It would be a shame for the hardworking men and women of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to be tainted by your address to this hate-group. That is why I urge you to cancel it.

Founded by white-nationalist John Tanton, who wrote in 1993 that the United States "requires a European-American majority," CIS has built a reputation for broadcasting racist anti-immigrant views. In addition to its role in disseminating racist and misleading messages about immigrants, CIS also has a long history of its leaders making vile and bigoted public statements, which have included a senior policy advisor calling for President Obama to be killed while he was in office. In 2014, CIS Executive Director Mark Kirkorian urged the United States to send a visitor with ebola back to Liberia rather than treat him in Texas where he fell ill, and in 2016 he claimed that Muslims celebrate September 11 as a holiday. Such abhorrent views and statements must not be given publicity or legitimacy.

Immigrants form the backbone of our communities and our economy. Nearly every American has a family story of immigration from a land of hardship to our nation of opportunity. You and I are both sons of immigrants, a legacy we have carried into public service and that, I hope, guides us both in seeking just policies for the benefit of all Americans and those who seek to become Americans. The maligning of immigrants – particularly immigrants of color – diminishes our country. I hope you will not give CIS and its leaders the unwarranted gift of having a senior government official address the group. It would be beneath the dignity of your office.

Sincerely,



STENY H. HOYER

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